

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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TAGS: SHUM PINT PFOR CI
SUBJECT: "COLONIA DIGNIDAD" HUNGER STRIKE

REF: SANTIAGO 2691

1. SOME 225 "COLONIA DIGNIDAD" RESIDENTS ON APRIL 27
ENDED A HUNGER STRIKE BEGUN EIGHT DAYS EARLIER PROTESTING
WHAT THEY VIEWED AS AN INJURIOUS AND SLANDEROUS CAMPAIGN
CARRIED ON IN GERMANY BY AMMESTY INTERNATIONAL, LUTHERAN
BISHOP HELMUT FRANZ, GERMAN MARXIST GROUPS AND SOME OF
THE GERMAN PRESS. DIGNIDAD WAS ACCUSED PRINCIPALLY OF
PERMITTING GOC SECURITY AGENTS TO CARRY OUT INTERROGATIONS
AND TORTURES OF LEFTIST ELEMENTS.

2. IN A DRAMATIC SHOW OF GOC INTEREST, HEALTH MINISTER
GENERAL FERNANDO MATTHEI -- ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE
PRESIDENT -- FLEW IN TO DIGNIDAD ON THE MORNING OF
APRIL 27 TO OBTAIN A READING ON THE SITUATION AND
TO "BRING A MESSAGE OF (GOVERNMENT) SUPPORT TO COUNTER
THE INTERNATIONAL CALUMNY..OF FRENZ..." MATTHEI
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REPORTEDLY ASKED THAT THE HUNGER STRIKE BE TERMINATED,
AS IT ENDANGERED THE HEALTH OF THE AGED RESIDENTS PAR-
TICIPATING.

3. THE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN IN DEFENSE OF COLONIA DIGNIDAD
(REFTEL) WAS RESTARTED. AS MATTHEI MET WITH DIGNIDAD
OFFICIALS, SEVERAL PERSONS IDENTIFYING THEMSELVES AS

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS ARRIVED WITH A NOTARIZED LETTER, ATTESTING TO THE "GENEROSITY AND HONEST WORK" OF THE DIGNIDAD COLONISTS AND "DECLARING THEIR PROFOUNDTEST ADHERENCE AND SOLIDARITY" TO THE GERMAN COMMUNITY.

4. MEDIA COVERAGE WAS THOROUGH. OFFICIAL "EL CRONISTA" ON APRIL 26 CARRIED THE FRONT PAGE HEADLINES "GERMAN COURT REQUESTS END TO ATTACKS ON COLONIA DIGNIDAD", AND ATTRIBUTED THE INFORMATION TO A SOURCE IN THE GERMAN EMBASSY IN SANTIAGO. ON MAY 2 "CRONISTS" PUBLISHED A TALLYSHEET SHOWING STATISTICS ON DIGNIDAD AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, AND ON MEDICAL SERVICES RENDERED BY DIGNIDAD COLONISTS SINCE 1961. THE BOTTOM LINE OF THE TALLY SHEET READ: "THIS IS COLONIA DIGNIDAD".

5. COMMENT: DIGNIDAD PRESUMABLY STARTED THE HUNGER STRIKE ON ITS OWN, BUT IN VIEW OF THE CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COLONY'S LEADERSHIP AND THE GOC, WE ASSUME THERE WAS GOOD COORDINATION. THE IMAGE PRESENTED IS ONE OF A PEACEFUL GROUP OF SETTLERS WHO, WHILE GOING ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS AND HELPING THEIR CHILEAN NEIGHBORS, WERE NOW UNDER ATTACK BY THE FORCES OF DARKNESS ABROAD. INTERNALLY AT LEAST, THE STAGED PRESENTATION CAME OFF WELL.
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